

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL
EDUCATION

Early Intervention Committee Meeting

LOCATION

Governor's Council Conference Room
3601 C Street
Anchorage, Alaska
Teleconference

Meeting Date

April 15, 2009

9:00 a.m.

Attendees:

Sarah Souders, Chair
Eric Gebhart
Meghan Johnson
Debbie Kitelinger
Donna Swihart
Amy Simpson
Mary Deitz
Maggie Ferry
Margaret Kavanaugh

Community Members/Guests:

Brita Bishop
Dorothy Erickson
Geri Benshoof
Linda Borghols

Staff:

Teresa Holt

Reported by:

Paula DiPaolo, Peninsula Reporting

Call to Order – 9:00 a.m.
Roll Call

Welcome from the Chair

Announcements and Good News

Teresa Holt announced that the Early Childhood Mental Health Institute is May 11 -13 in Anchorage and stated that Gail Trujillo will be presenting on infant mental health. It is a free conference and Teresa will forward the information to all the EIC members.

Donna Swihart announced that her daughter was pulled for the waiver.

Brita Bishop announced that the early childhood funding was cut for both the learning network and for the grants. She also noted that while there is Trust funding for both of those, there is a good chance the Trust might take out their funding at their May meeting. She believes that it was Representative Hawker who was the one who removed those items as well as a couple of other items for Bring the Kids Home from the budget.

Teresa Holt asked what the early childhood grants do and Brita Bishop replied that they were hoping to expand the early childhood mental health consultations that are happening with a project with Juneau Youth Services. Meghan Johnson added that they was a grant that Anchorage Community Mental Health received and she believes that this money was to help continue to support it. Brita also believes that some of the money was also to fund the learning coordinator to help with workforce development around early childhood mental health projects and programs.

Approval of the Past Minutes

Amy Simpson made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the March 18th meeting. Donna Swihart **SECONDED**. The minutes were **APPROVED**.

Correspondence

Teresa Holt stated that she wasn't able to reach Representative Cissna's office because it's near the end of the session. They will have to postpone

their research of the poor quality issue.

Review of APR Indicators for ILP

Committee Comments on Indicators 4-6

Teresa Holt noted that they are a little low on Indicator 6 as it compares to the rest of the United States. One of the improvement activities included updating materials and she noted that the State ILP brochure has been updated and encouraged everyone to look at it. Eric Gebhart commented that he would like to see a toll free number to call if someone's community doesn't have an early learning program. Sarah Souders questioned the dash in the middle of the word "important" on the second page.

Indicator 7

Teresa Holt explained that indicator 7 is the percent of eligible infants and toddlers with IFSPs for whom an evaluation and assessment and initial IFSP meeting were conducted within the 45-day timeline.

Amy Simpson clarified that the 45-day timeline includes weekends and holidays and summer vacation. They were hoping that with the reauthorization of IDEA it was going to change a little bit and become more realistic, but that hasn't happened yet. She stated that at PIC, they get about 1,000 referrals a year. If they receive a referral, the clock starts counting and sometimes it takes two or three weeks to track down a family that's been referred from child protection who is not in the State's custody. She stated that sometimes staffing issues impact that 45-day timeline. In rural communities, travel and weather affect the timeline. They don't get to stop the clock when these complications arise. The clock only stops if a parent cancels appointments or the child is in a hospital out of state or things like that. Eric Gebhart agreed and gave a similar example of a weather related complication in Kake.

Eric Gebhart suggested that for this indicator he believes it would be important for them to understand the reasons that folks aren't meeting the 45-day timeline and maybe track those. Amy Simpson stated that in ILP they track the reasons, but OSEP doesn't care.

Linda Borghols stated that she spoke with Lisa Balivet and Lisa told her

that actually OSEP is beginning to contemplate scenarios that Alaskans face up here and they're beginning to formulate a plan for a waiver or an exception. She stated that another change would be if they could change the federal law to have the clock start from the time the parent gives consent for the evaluation, she thinks that would help a lot of programs meet their timelines. She stated that the feds have done site visits before so they're not totally unfamiliar with the situations that they face.

Margaret Kavanaugh stated that under Part B services, the clock doesn't start ticking until the parents sign consent.

Indicators 8 and 12

Teresa Holt stated that 8 and 12 are very similar and that Indicator 8 talks about the percent of children in infant learning programs who have an IFSP that has transition steps to go to Part B. The three parts are: Do the IFSPs have steps for transition and services, did the infant learning program notify the school, and was there a transition conference.

Indicator 12 is the percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3 who were found eligible for Part B and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their 3rd birthday. She referred the committee to page 32 of the APR.

Teresa Holt then explained that the improvement activities that the State is doing include:

- ☒ A regular data review by the ILP staff of infant learning programs with corrective action plans

Teresa Holt stated that this goes into one of their work plan activities which is the Alaska Transition Training Initiative e-module that Meghan, Sharon, Gail and Beth worked on.

Debbie Kitelinger is involved with the Alaska Training and Transition Project also and she stated that it's for the school districts to do to be more compliant with their transition from infant learning to the school district. She stated that sometimes communities want to be trained and they go into communities and bring together all the different groups for a two-day training as to what the requirements for transition are as far as the law is

concerned. They also help them to work towards getting an MOA in place and make sure they understand that all members are equal members of the team as oftentimes; parents don't feel like they're being heard.

Debbie Kitelinger stated that one of the biggest barriers is miscommunication or lack of communication between infant learning and the school district. Other barriers are true collaboration and constant turnover.

Teresa Holt asked the committee to think about the problems and come up with solutions and comments they can offer to the State to improve these two indicators.

EIC/ILP Advocacy Plan – Alaska's Kids Can't Wait

Legislative Report

Teresa Holt stated that the Governor accepted the federal stimulus money which includes funds for infant learning, preschool and also Head Start. She stated that the bad news is that she would like to take that money and replace general funds with that money instead of using it for staff training and building upgrades. Erin Kinavey has been working with the Office of Management & Budget to explain what they would do with that money and why supplanting that stimulus money would not be a good idea. Linda Borghols expanded and stated that Erin has been strongly advocating for an ongoing ILP increment.

Teresa Holt stated that the budget passed the House and the Senate and it looks like their \$1.3 million is still there, but she is of the understanding that the Office of Management & Budget can supplant the stimulus money even after it's all done. It also has to go before the Governor and they're hoping that she won't cut it out at the last minute.

House Bill 59, which is to expand preschool programs in school districts, has both a Senate and a House bill. Teresa Holt stated that those might go through.

Teresa stated that the Parents as Teachers expansion bill, House Bill 69 has left the House and has moved to the Senate Education Committee, but the word is that it's not going to get all the way through this legislative

session. She stated that the Council sent a letter of support for this.

Meghan Johnson stated that the Denali KidCare bill, SB-13 has stalled a little bit and encouraged everyone to contact the HESS and the Finance committee members.

Stimulus Funding Update

Linda Borghols stated that she has nothing additional to add, but noted that they can't finalize their budgets for next year until they know the dollar amounts.

Review of the Work Plan

Research other states 619 positions vs. populations

Teresa Holt stated that the research probably won't be able to happen until after the May Council meeting.

ATTI E-Module

Sarah Souders stated that there was nothing additional to add under this agenda item.

Early Childhood Summit

Teresa Holt stated that Paul Sugar and Sharon Schumacher haven't really had time to pull anything together and Teresa suggested that over the summer they can advocate for them to work on that. Meghan Johnston stated that she understands that this summit will be more administrative and systems-based rather than content based for practitioners and educators.

Work Plan Priorities for May Council Meeting

Teresa Holt stated the current priorities as follows:

- ☒ Increase ILP funding with a secondary goal of changing the eligibility from a 50 percent delay to a 25 percent delay
- ☒ Looking at preschool issues and creating a survey of all

preschool providers. The survey has been created but won't be sent out until the fall

- ☒ Expand ATTI
- ☒ Increase awareness of ILP, create the EIC brochure, have the State update their ILP brochure, and look at a distribution plan
- ☒ Increase participation in the annual report to the Governor.

Meghan Johnson stated that she thinks it might be helpful to contact Erin and see if there is anything that she could suggest they add to or change on the work plan.

Amy Simpson suggested that they propose priorities which have some momentum such as the 619 coordinator, transitions with the ATTI group, changing the billing structure for ILP, both for private insurance and Medicaid. Amy stated that she thinks they need to put the eligibility change on the back burner.

Eric Gebhart noted that he believes one of them should be at the table regarding the preschool money coming in so that there's recognition that there will be students with disabilities that are going to be in these programs and ensure that their needs are met. Meghan Johnson agreed and noted that a quality developmentally appropriate preschool program for all children needs to be defined and there is a need to educate principals, kindergarten teachers and the general public about what it would look like. Geri Benshoof stated that there is support on the Board of Education for this concept.

Teresa Holt stated that she will draft a recommendation of those four priorities. Sarah Souders also recommended contacting Sharon Schumacher to see if she has anything else she would like to add to the list.

Report from OCS/ILP

Linda Borghols stated that Erin is working with the rate and review but she thinks that the change in eligibility will be on hold because of the federal regulations being pulled.

Linda stated that she thinks that the EIC could play an active role in the distribution planning process for the literature they're putting out. She

stated that the brochure “Parents are Often the First to Know” is currently in draft and she will forward that on to Teresa. She said that the committee set up to review these documents will next be looking at the “Step Ahead at Age 3”. After that will be the “Parent’s Rights” booklet.

Linda Borghols stated that they are in a holding pattern until they find out their funding. She stated that hopefully they will have more information to present at the May Council meeting.

Report from AILPA

Amy Simpson stated that she has drafted a thank-you letter to present to AILPA to thank them for their support of early intervention. She’s also going to draft some postcards that families can fill in and send to their representatives in the event the money does stay in.

Report from DEED

Teresa Holt stated that they had a diesel fuel leak into their building which got into the ventilation system and the resulting building evacuation disrupted everything so there is no report to give at this time.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the EIC will be on May 20th at 9:00 a.m.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.